

WGSL Storm Event Plan Update

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Greetings all.

Per our conversation this past Sunday evening, please find a progress report documenting our activities since the 100 year rainfall on January 13th. As noted, on & off site clean up activities are ongoing and successful, and construction intended to activate the storm water diversion around the landfill are on schedule.

Best regards,

Joe <<Waimanalo Gulch Landfill Storm Clean Up Plan v2.pdf>>

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Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill Storm Cleanup Plan

Situation

The Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill (WGSL) is located in Waimanalo Gulch, Kahe Valley, on the Island of Oahu. The property is owned by the City & County of Honolulu (CCH) and operated by Waste Management of Hawaii, Inc. (WM) under the jurisdiction of the CCH Department of Environmental Services.

A “100-year storm” hit Oahu on Jan. 13, following two back-to-back “25-year storms” in December that had already saturated the area and the landfill. The impact was further exacerbated by a massive flow of storm water coming down from the canyon located above the landfill. Rainfall indicators showed that more than 11 inches of rain (an estimated more than 200 million gallons of water) fell on Jan. 13 in the landfill area within 24 hours — close to 60 percent of the average annual rainfall for the area (19 inches).

As a result, it was determined that municipal solid waste (MSW), including limited amounts of sterilized medical waste, exited the facility through an overflow of the permitted storm water outfall. This material subsequently entered the Pacific Ocean and began appearing on the shoreline.

Evolution & Response Report

The purpose of this report is to document the immediate steps taken to lessen potential negative impacts to public health and the environment. The following is an account of steps taken.

1. On Thursday, Jan. 13, WM evaluated storm water conditions throughout the day of the storm event and determined that a large body of storm water had collected in the area of the new cell construction. A phone conference was held among representatives of WM, CCH and various divisions within the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH). As a result of these discussions, it was agreed that WM and CCH would immediately install warning signs in the shoreline area of the Ko Olina Resort, where the WGSL outfall is located, and along the associated beach shoreline. Additionally, WM and CCH began a water quality sampling program that same day.
2. Later on Jan. 13, WMH began cleanup of MSW at the overflow on the storm water sedimentation basin once the flood waters had subsided enough to perform this operation safely. At that time, it was determined that the MSW also contained sterilized medical waste.
3. In the morning of Friday, Jan. 14, WM dispatched an evaluation and cleanup team to the ocean side of the WGSL permitted storm water outfall, located on the north end of the Ko Olina Resort property across Farrington Highway from the landfill. The crew spent several hours cleaning MSW from this area. At the time, there was no apparent evidence of remaining medical waste material. WM continued to clean up areas located between the sediment basin and the permitted outfall.
4. Also on Jan. 14, representatives of WM, CCH and HDOH held a press conference at the landfill in order to further inform the public of the potential health threat associated with the storm events, and to provide an update on the cleanup efforts, warning sign postings and water quality sampling being performed by WM and CCH. Numerous news interviews and press releases were provided by all parties over the following several days in order to keep the public fully informed.

5. On Saturday, June 15, WM personnel continued evaluation of the shoreline area. In the afternoon, additional medical waste material was reported in the WM outfall area located near the Ko Olina Resort area.
6. At 7 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, WM sent its cleanup crew back to the area and evaluated an approximate one half to three quarters of a mile section of the beach, including a return to the outfall area. No further medical waste was noted by WM personnel at this time.
7. A hotline was also set up on Jan. 16 to provide the public with the opportunity to report any observations of medical waste material found on local beaches. The HDOH announced the hotline to the public via news media, and WM representatives are continuing to remind news media to include the hotline in any further media updates. WM representatives continue to use reports provided via the hotline to evaluate information and determine where to concentrate its ongoing daily cleanup efforts.
8. Subsequently, in the afternoon of Jan. 16, WM was notified that some plastic syringes (absent needles) had been found at the White Plains beach located farther south on the shoreline. WM dispatched cleanup crews to this beach, as well as the Kahe public beach located to the north of the WM permitted outfall.
9. On Monday, Jan. 17, WM cleanup crews were sent to all three of the aforementioned areas and collected additional debris from the shoreline, including what appeared to be a lessening amount of medical waste.
10. On Tuesday, Jan. 18, WM dispatched cleanup crews at 8 a.m., initially focusing attention at Nimitz beach, followed by White Plains and then the storm water outfall.

Crews will continue to be responsive to reported findings from the public. Evaluation and cleanup crews will continue to be sent to these locations on a daily basis until debris resulting from the discharge is no longer being found. Warning signs will remain in place until sampling results determine that the water returns to normal levels.

All MSW removed from the various beach cleanup activities have been transported to the landfill for proper disposal at a later time.

At the time of the storm, Waste Management was already in the process of building a new diversion channel designed to direct future floodwaters around the main body of the landfill. Completion of the portion of the new channel that will divert water originating from the canyon is expected to be completed in a few weeks. While the new diversion channel is being completed, WM will work with the City and State to ensure compliance with all applicable permits and laws for any further plans to discharge storm water into the storm drainage system.